

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 268443

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 L-03 H-02 DHA-02 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 SCA-01 /029 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:WNHOWELL:PDW

APPROVED BY NEA:ARDBAY

NEA/ARN:MDRAPER

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P R 011804Z NOV 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 268443

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, LE

SUBJECT: REPORTED CAPTURE OF PROF. JOHN (HANNA) MIKHAIL

REF: (A) STATE 228478 (NOTAL),(0) BEIRUT 7568 (NOTAL)

1. MRS. JOYCE HANNAH, AMCIT SISTER OF JOHN MIKHAIL (AKA: ABU OMAR), CALLED OCTOBER 28 ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAY, TO SEEK ASSISTANCE IN LOCATING HER BROTHER WHO HAS BEEN MISSING SINCE JULY 20. (FYI: ANOTHER SISTER OF THE MISSING MAN IS THE WIFE OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SCHOOL AT RAMALLAH, WEST BANK. END FYI).

2. MRS. HANNAH SAID THAT TO THE BEST OF HER KNOWLEDGE JOHN MIKHAIL DISAPPEARED JULY 20 FROM A VESSEL ENROUTE FROM SIDON TO TRIPOLI. MIKHAIL, AFFILIATED WITH THE PLO, WAS REPORTED BY THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR TO HAVE BEEN CAPTURED BY THE "PHALANGE" BUT FAMILY CONTACTS WITH THE MONITOR HAVE NOT RPT NOT TURNED UP ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. THE FAMILY, INCLUDING MIKHAIL'S WIFE WHO RESIDES IN BEIRUT, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 268443

HAVE MADE NUMEROUS EFFORTS TO OBTAIN INFORMATION RE

MIKHAIL'S PRESENT WHEREABOUTS WITHOUT SATISFACTORY RESULTS. CONTACTS, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS, HAVE PRODUCED RUMORS THAT MIKHAIL IS VARIOUSLY IN PRISON IN SYRIA, BEING HELD BY "TONY FRANGIE'S ARMY" OR DEAD

(EXECUTED), MRS. HANNAH SAID THAT SHE SOUGHT OCTOBER 27 THE ASSISTANCE OF THE SYRIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON AND PRESENTED HIM WITH A PETITION SIGNED BY MIKHAIL'S FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, WHERE HE TAUGHT UNTIL 1969.

3. DAY INFORMED MRS. HANNAH THAT WE HAD PREVIOUSLY QUERIED OUR EMBASSY IN BEIRUT WITH NEGATIVE RESULTS AND OUTLINED THE DIFFICULTY OF OBTAINING RELIABLE INFORMATION IN SUCH CASES DURING THE CONFLICT IN LEBANON. HE RECOMMENDED THAT SHE AND HER FAMILY MAINTAIN THEIR CONTACTS WITH THE RED CROSS WHICH IS APPARENTLY EXPANDING ITS TRACING SERVICE IN LEBANON AND PROMISED THAT WE WOULD SEEK WHATEVER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OUR EMBASSIES IN BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS MIGHT PROVIDE ON THE WHEREABOUTS OF JOHN MIKHAIL NOW THAT CONDITIONS HAVE IMPROVED.

4. IN VIEW OF CONTINUING INTEREST HERE IN FATE OF MIKHAIL, WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO DEVELOP DISCRETELY RE THIS CASE. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 NOV 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE268443
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: WNHOWELL:PDW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760407-0106
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761193/aaaadcsp.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 228478, 76 BEIRUT 7568
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 JUN 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <07 OCT 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPORTED CAPTURE OF PROF. JOHN (HANNA) MIKHAIL
TAGS: PINS, LE, (MIKAIL, JOHN)
To: BEIRUT DAMASCUS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006